

# Quality Information: Reaching the Right People at the Right Time

Shoshanna Sofaer, Dr.P.H., Baruch College  
Harvard Team

# Overview



- **Why are dissemination and promotion important?**
- **Alternative modes of dissemination**
- **Alternative modes of promotion**

# Why Is Dissemination Important?



- **Use is the desired endpoint for any quality reporting effort**
  - No matter how compelling the data
  - No matter how elegant your report
  - If people don't get the report, they can't use the report
- **Dissemination is about people being able to access the report easily**

# Why Is Promotion Important?



- Even if people have access to the report
- Even if they physically receive the report
- Unless they look at it, they won't use it
- Promotion is about getting people to look at the report

# Why Are Dissemination and Promotion Important?



- **Isn't this obvious? Why are we talking about it today?**
- **Because all too often...**
  - People do not take dissemination and promotion decisions seriously.
  - People do not put resources into dissemination and promotion.
- **Result: Wonderful reports don't get used.**

# Modes of Dissemination



- Medium and mode are related
- Thus, there are a set of dissemination approaches linked to a print report and another set of dissemination approaches linked to a computerized report
- Multiple media can also be used, e.g., easily printable computerized reports



# Modes of Dissemination: When “Hard Copy” Only



- You can wait for people to request it
- You can mail it to everyone you want to reach
- You can leave piles of reports in various locations for people to pick up
- You can incorporate the delivery of the report into an interpersonal interaction of some kind

# Modes of Dissemination: When “Hard Copy” Only (cont.)



- You can get it incorporated into some form of mass media (like an insert in a newspaper or magazine) and use that medium's dissemination channels
- Other options?



# Modes of Dissemination: When Electronic Report



## ■ Internet

- Web site
- Email
- Both

## ■ Intranet

- Kiosk
- Laptop presentation

# Modes of Dissemination: Issues to Consider



- **Timing** – Are there particular points in time that are critical for the use of the report?
- **Audience(s)** –
  - Who really HAS to get the report?
  - Who else should/could get the report?
  - How would these audiences like to get the report?
  - Reality check: Will they really get the report through the channels you have chosen?

# Modes of Dissemination: More Issues to Consider



## ■ Motivation –

- Are your expectations realistic about interest in the report?
- How proactive do you have to be to make sure people get the report in a timely way?

## ■ Trust – To what extent will your choice of dissemination channel influence trust in the report?

# Modes of Dissemination: More Issues to Consider



- **Decision support** – To what extent will your audience need help in understanding the report and using it to make a decision?
- **Use of intermediaries** – How can you use “intermediaries” as a vehicle for both dissemination and decision support?

# Modes of Promotion: Basic Assumptions



- Few people naturally have a passion for looking at comparative quality reports.
- They don't have a clear understanding of what a quality report would contain.
- They don't assume that quality varies in ways that could really affect their health care/health.

# Modes of Promotion: More Basic Assumptions



- They have more interesting/important things to do with their time.
- They may not want to entertain the notion that the health care they now get is not high quality.
- They figure they won't be able to understand the report.
- They can always ask their doctor or their mother!



# Modes of Promotion: More Basic Assumptions



- We need to use what we know from social marketing and communication to increase the level of interest in reports.
- Part of this is providing a report that meets the felt needs of the audience.
- The other part is making sure they know the report is available, has significant benefits, and is easy to get, understand, and use.

# Modes of Promotion: Brainstorming Session



- **Why (or under what circumstances) would someone take the time and trouble to look at a comparative quality report?**
- **What are the implications of what we have just said?**

# Modes of Promotion



- What we learn from social marketing should affect ALL aspects of our reporting efforts, and indeed should affect what we actually report.
- So “promotion” is something that is integral to the entire reporting process, i.e., if the report isn’t responsive to audience needs you won’t be able to promote it effectively.

# Ways to Think About Promoting the Report



- How do we let people know the report is available (or is going to be available soon)?
- How do we let people know how to access the report?
- How do we “frame” the report so it is attractive to the audience?
- What messages will be most effective in getting people to look at the report?
  - Messages delivered without respect to a particular report
  - Messages specific to a particular report

# Classic Social Marketing Questions About Your Audience



- What do THEY value?
- What's the competition for your product/service?
- What barriers do you face in getting people to use your product/service?
- What supports people in using your product/service?

# Modes of Promotion



- **From the answers to these questions, you not only shape your product, but you define:**
  - The benefits you have to emphasize
  - In particular, how you provide more value than the competition
  - The barriers you have to neutralize
  - The facilitators you have to take advantage of



# Modes of Promotion



- **Do we know exactly how to do this? No.**
  - Promotion in particular has not been a major focus of research and development in the world of CAHPS and other comparative quality reporting efforts.
  - However, there is considerable evidence that promotional efforts need to be tailored to the audience and the particular decision they are facing.

# Modes of Promotion



- **Will this be easy? No.**
  - People who work in the area of quality measurement don't know much about social marketing and communication.
  - Frankly, we don't have an easy product to "sell."
- **This means it is critical that we continue to share experiences with each other so we can begin identifying "best practices" and "worst practices" as well.**

# Successful Promotion of Quality Reports: What Will It Take?



- A willingness to involve people from other worlds in our work
- A willingness to invest resources
- A recognition that we will make mistakes along the way – the only “sin” is not to learn from them!